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NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

No. DCXXXIII.

AUGUST, 1908.

GROVER CLEVELAND.

BY THE LATE HENRY LOOMIS NELSON. REVISED BY THE LATE
DANIEL S. LAMONT.

For several years before his death, Grover Cleveland was recognized by most of his fellow countrymen as the first citizen of the land. He was an eminent product of democratic institutions. He did not in his youth possess the advantages of wealth, nor did he suffer any of its disadvantages. The circumstances of his immediate family were narrow; he had not the money with which to pay for a college education, nor had he the time to earn one; but he was brought up in a wholesome domestic atmosphere, with parents of intellectual force and of some education. In his earliest days he was a member of a household which knew neither poverty nor riches, and in his later youth he dwelt in the home of an uncle who had sufficient of the world's goods to give to himself and his young guest comfort, even luxury, and that in the society of men of power and of position in the State and the Nation. The youth was not unfortunate in the beginning of his life, which was that of the normal American boy.

Mr. Cleveland was born at Caldwell, Essex County, New Jersey, on the 18th of March, 1837. His father, who was the Presbyterian minister of the town, was born at Norwich, Connecticut, where the grandfather of the subject of this sketch had

followed the occupation of watchmaker. On the father's side, Mr. Cleveland was of English stock; on his mother's side he was partly of Irish blood. His mother was Anna Neal, the daughter of an Irishman who was a bookseller and publisher in Baltimore. But, as so often happens in this country of mingled and mingling races, this Irish blood was not pure, for the mother's mother was Barbara Real, a German Quakeress, of Germantown, Pennsylvania.

The boy was baptized Stephen Grover, in honor of the father's predecessor in the Caldwell pastorate, but the first name was dropped by Mr. Cleveland in early life. In 1841, the family moved to Fayetteville, then to Clinton, then to Holland Patent, all in New York.

In Holland Patent, Grover Cleveland grew up. Here his father died in 1853, when this son was sixteen years of age. There were eight other children, and the mother was left in such circumstances as are commonly the lot of widows of country pastors. Like many other such widows in this country, too, she bore her ills with dignity and courage, and nobly did her duty by her young family. The affectionate remembrance and the high honor in which she was held by her famous son are shown in a letter which he wrote to his brother on the day when he was chosen Governor of New York. Said he: "If mother were here, I should be writing to her, and I feel as if it were time to write to some one who will believe what I write." And again, in the course of the same letter, Mr. Cleveland wrote: "Do you know that if mother were alive I should feel safer? I have always thought her prayers had much to do with my success."

Mr. Cleveland had the usual schooling of the country, and had prepared to enter Hamilton College, but his father's death compelled him to take up the task of bread-winning. He had been a clerk in a country store at Fayetteville before his father died. Now, when he was seventeen years old, he became an assistant to his brother, who was the principal of the boys' and men's department of the New York Institution for the Blind. At the end of a year he went to Buffalo to study law. His boyhood had been circumscribed, his energies had been bounded, his teaching had been meagre. It is likely that under like circumstances in any other country the family would have suffered want, but it is doubtful if the mother and her children ever knew by expe-

rience what such suffering meant. The boy had passed a wholesome boyhood, and his instruction, small though it was, had been intellectually and morally sound.

He spent his years in Buffalo in easy circumstances. He had started from Holland Patent to go to Cleveland, Ohio. He was emigrating to that part of the country, which was then the West. His uncle, Lewis H. Allen, lived in Buffalo and stopped his nephew on the journey. In Mr. Allen's fine house overlooking the Niagara River Mr. Cleveland passed the days of his apprenticeship to the bar. Buffalo was an intellectual, political and social centre. Millard Fillmore was its first citizen, while at the bar were some of the strongest lawyers of the State. In this intellectual and social atmosphere Mr. Cleveland began his active career. He was always a favorite of the best people, and was one of them. Following the instincts of their kind, his partisan opponents, when he first became the candidate of his party for President, undertook to class him with those whom good society refuses to recognize; but, in truth, he lived with the best, and was, from the beginning of his professional career, a successful lawyer. He was also a man of mark in the community, one of the best citizens of the town, ready to do his civic duty, a patriot who believed profoundly in the responsibilities and duties of every one who enjoys the blessings and privileges of American citizenship. In his profession he was not ambitious of a great practice; in his civic and in his public life he was always moved by a high moral purpose. He was once Sheriff of Erie County for the purpose of gaining the opportunity and the means for securing a better legal education than he could gain in the practice of the profession; for, though he did not seek great gains, he desired to perform his tasks as well as possible. He took advantage of the opportunities and employed the means thus acquired for this purpose. He had been Assistant District Attorney and an efficient prosecuting officer. He afterwards gained such a position at the bar that on the death of Mr. Lanning, the very able counsel of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad, Mr. Cleveland was invited to be his successor. He declined the invitation for the reason that his practice gave him sufficient for his wants, and he did not wish to tie himself to the service of such an exacting client. He advised the employment of the young men who had been Mr. Lanning's

partners, but there was objection to them because of their youth and consequent lack of experience. With characteristic generosity, Mr. Cleveland then offered to accept the retainer of the railroad company until the young men could secure a senior member for their firm who would be a counsel satisfactory to the corporation. During the short time when he thus represented the company, its legal business was admirably performed; and this I have from the then president of the railroad, himself a lawyer and a leader of the Republican party.

During his novitiate he had acquired property worth, probably, about \$100,000. This property consisted of houses and land in the city of Buffalo. It is necessary to mention this because it has been alleged by malicious, and has been repeated by ignorant, persons that Mr. Cleveland entered public life an unsuccessful and impecunious man. His position in Buffalo, on the contrary, was characteristic of successful Americans and of American social life.

In 1881, when Mr. Cleveland was forty-four years old, the time came when high public office was bestowed upon him. He was chosen Mayor of Buffalo by the largest majority ever before given to any candidate in the city. He had been the candidate of his party, and he was always a partisan Democrat. He believed in the principles of the party which leaned on the plain people, consulted primarily their interests, and trusted them. In his speech of acceptance and in his inaugural address he emphasized what was the guiding principle of his public career. In the first he said: "When we consider that public officials are the trustees of the people and hold their places and exercise their powers for the benefit of the people, there should be no higher inducement to a faithful and honest discharge of public duty." In the second he said: "We hold the money of the people in our hands, to be used for their purposes and to further their interests as members of the municipality; and it is quite apparent that, when any part of the funds which the taxpayers have thus intrusted to us are diverted to other purposes, or when, by design or neglect, we allow a greater sum to be applied to any municipal purpose than is necessary, we have, to that extent, violated our duty."

The administration of the office of Mayor, thus begun, was soon to attract the attention of the State and then of the nation.

Amid all the American cities of the time, Buffalo possessed a Mayor who illustrated, in the discharge of his duties, the highest type of American common sense, American honesty and character, American courage and American plainness of speech. It is true that these virtues are not peculiar to our country, except, perhaps, the last; but the denial that they are to be found in American public men has made it well to emphasize the fact that in this country, more than in any other, are men unused to public life who, when the responsibility is thrown upon them, apply to daily civic duties the loftiest civic virtues. As Mayor, Mr. Cleveland served the city with a single purpose. He vetoed improper appropriations. He drew the line between public duty and private charity. He refused to permit the Aldermen to spend the city's money for the observance of Decoration Day, because the money had not been taken from the taxpayers for that purpose; and he headed a private and sufficient subscription. It was a lesson teaching the difference between a public object and a private object. He attacked the vultures who had grown fat on corrupt contracts. In public addresses he gave evidence of his high idealism. At the semi-centennial of the founding of the city he said: "We boast of our citizenship to-night. But this citizenship brings with it duties not unlike those we owe our neighbor and our God. . . . He who indolently cares not who administers the government of his city will find that he is living falsely, and in the neglect of his highest duty."

He had been Mayor of Buffalo for less than a year when he was nominated by the Democratic party for Governor of New York. Mr. Cleveland's fame had grown by the manner in which he had administered his municipal office, and this fame was non-partisan. His following in Buffalo consisted of the good citizens of both parties. His political enemies were also, impartially, the bad citizens of both parties. He was the Mayor of the city, and they naturally desired to have a Mayor of a party; it mattered not which party, for a party hack is a better mayor for the corrupt men of the opposition than is a good mayor for either party. The Democratic party had been torn into factions by fights with Tammany. The New York County Democracy had, in 1879, driven Tammany to revolt. This organization was determined to prevent its city and county opponents, by an alliance with the "Up-State" Democrats, from ruling the State.

They had bolted the nomination of Lucius Robinson, and had compassed his defeat. The New York City organization was now, in 1882, fronting the opposition of the Brooklyn, or Kings County, organization led by Mr. Hugh McLaughlin. The rival candidates for the nomination for Governor were Roswell P. Flower and Henry W. Slocum. It was an important year, for it was evident that the national Democrats had an opportunity which, however, they might ruin by internal discord and strife. The dissensions in the cities gave to the County Democracy and their country allies their opportunity. No shrewder and abler politicians ever managed party affairs in New York than Mr. William C. Whitney and Mr. Daniel Manning. They were the leaders of the County Democracy, a name synonymous in New York City with the party of Tilden. This party, or the Democratic party of thirty years ago, when it was led by the Tilden men, was the party of promise; and whenever this party, or this faction of the party, dominated in State politics, the Democrats carried the day. The County Democracy, or the friends of Tilden, under the advice of Mr. Whitney and Mr. Manning, took up the cause of Mr. Cleveland, who was first named by the people of Buffalo. Tammany, facing defeat from Brooklyn, yielded to its old enemies, and supported Mr. Cleveland. He was nominated on the third ballot. His nomination was the successful result of a movement to defeat both Tammany and Kings County, at the same time to harmonize the party, and to name a candidate who might be elected. As events demonstrated, the Democrats had made the best nomination possible. Mr. Cleveland's name, owing to his services as Mayor of Buffalo, appealed to the people of the State. The Republican party was torn to pieces. Not only in New York, but throughout the country, its factional strife had reaped the usual consequences of such contentions. The party was actually split in two, and the election of a Democratic President in 1884 was practically assured if the party, in choosing its candidate, would forget its folly of 1880 and return to its wisdom of 1876. In New York, the Blaine men were the bitter enemies of the Conkling men, while the Conkling men had also come to be the enemies of President Arthur. Mr. Arthur forced the nomination of Judge Folger against the angry protests of Conkling, and the way was open to Mr. Cleveland to the Governorship.

It was a singular characteristic of Mr. Cleveland's political career that he was never elected to any office, except, perhaps, that of Sheriff, by a purely partisan vote. In every one of his campaigns in which he was successful he received the votes of Independents and Republicans. He was a party man in his political thoughts and conceptions; and, while he was never a slave of organization, he preferred the cause of his party if that cause was in harmony with what he conceived to be its principles. True as he was to principle, however, he was known to be firmly devoted to the interests of the whole community, city or State, in administering the public business; to be wholly unselfish; to be a devoted servant of the law, absolutely pure; and as sternly courageous as were the unbending Connecticut Puritans of his paternal stock. So the people who were discontented with the quarrelling factions of the Republican party voted for Mr. Cleveland, and he was elected Governor of the State by the wonderful majority of 193,000.

It was on the first day of 1883, one year after his inauguration as Mayor of Buffalo, that Mr. Cleveland was inaugurated as Governor of New York. In this one year of public service, Mr. Cleveland's reputation had attained to national proportions, and he was recognized as one worthy to be considered as a candidate for the Presidency. His Governorship was marked, as was his Mayoralty, by the traits of character, the capacity, the industry and the reverence for the law of the land and for the spirit of that law, which have marked him as easily the best endowed, the best equipped and the most effective American Executive since Abraham Lincoln. I may as well explain that I have called him the most effective because, with a strong hostile element among the Congressmen of his own party, he succeeded in securing the most valuable piece of legislation for the country which has been enacted since the War of Secession. This, however, is anticipating the time which is yet to be considered in this recital. As Governor, Mr. Cleveland protected the rights and the property of the taxpayers against wasteful and illegal legislation. He acted as trustee for those who, by the payment of taxes, furnished the revenues of the State. He showed also that courage, that absolute indifference to possible, even to probable, consequences to himself, which more than once distinguished his career as President. He was always unmoved from his purpose to consider

as pre-eminent the rights of the whole State, notwithstanding popular or partisan clamor. So, against the outcries of the people of the city of New York, he declined to sign a bill granting a uniform fare of five cents on the Elevated Railway, not because such a fare would not have been sufficient and, therefore, just, but because, by its own law, the State was pledged in honor not to pass such a measure. "But we have especially in our keeping," he wrote, "the honor and good faith of a great State, and we should see to it that no suspicion attaches, through any act of ours, to the fair fame of the Commonwealth."

The calm sense and the cool courage which enabled Mr. Cleveland to defend the law against the assaults of passion did not impair his usefulness nor has his conduct injured his fame. He would not yield to the passions of the multitude, nor would he sign bills whose enactment would merely have aided his party.

These were the days when Civil Service Reform was in its infancy, for it was when Mr. Cleveland was Governor, in 1883, that the Pendleton Bill, establishing the present national merit system, was passed by Congress. Mr. Cleveland's appointments as Governor, however, were made on about the same principle as that which was adopted nearly twenty years later by Mr. Roosevelt. He entered office at a time when the spoils system was in vogue. There was no classified list whatever, and it had been the practice of good Executives to secure the best assistants whom the party workers could name. Mr. Cleveland only insisted upon good men, the best who could be obtained from the recognized source; but for some of his officers, notably for his Superintendent of Insurance, and for his Commissioner of the Capitol, he promoted subordinates, or went entirely outside of the politicians and sought for experts. He treated the subjects of labor and corporations from the point of view of a sane and sympathetic lawyer and man of affairs. He would promote the valid interests of both, and he would defend the State, or the community, from the injurious acts of either. He rose steadily in the esteem of all who desire to see government in the hands of careful men devoted to the general good, servants of the law, having those essential characteristics, apparently so commonplace, in fact so uncommon, that make a man a trustee who is to be trusted implicitly with all the property of his wards or with all the rights and privileges of his State or of his country.

Thus confided in, not only by the people of his State, but by the observing and watchful people of the country, Mr. Cleveland came to his national honors. He had been elected Governor of the State before he completed his term as Mayor of Buffalo, and he was chosen President of the United States while he was still Governor. As he was nominated for Governor by the able politicians who led the Democrats of the State outside of Tammany Hall and Kings County, so it was by their astute leadership that the National Convention which met in Chicago on the 8th of July, 1884, was convinced that Mr. Cleveland was the most available, and the best, man to lead the Democratic party in the coming contest. His nomination was not a spontaneous act on the part of the Convention. He met with opposition, and the most dangerous hostility came from his own State. Tammany Hall, under the leadership of John Kelly, was strongly opposed to him in 1884, as the same organization was opposed to him later under the leadership of Richard Croker. In the whole course of his political career he never made friends with the element of his party which Tammany represented. Once in a while he yielded his judgment to some of the ordinary kind of party leaders, usually to his regret and never to their full satisfaction; but he never made it the rule of his conduct to take the word of the "organization," even when the leader was a Senator, in place of the word of better citizens who had no private ends to gain by securing the appointment to public office of men who would do their bidding. Tammany was against him because his election meant nothing of profit to the "Hall." Furthermore, too, there were as candidates for the nomination distinguished men who had rendered admirable service to the party and the country, any one of whom would have had the advantage, in character, over the Republican candidate. Thomas F. Bayard, Allen G. Thurman and Thomas A. Hendricks were the principal names against his, and the first of these, to say nothing of the others, appealed strongly to the independent voters. All three, however, were hampered in the estimation of the country, because they had participated, in opposition to the prevailing party and its triumphant policy, in the politics of the War and of reconstruction. They had thus been looked upon by thousands of people who had actually grown weary of the Republican party, and of its jangling leaders, as enemies of the Union. An infu-

sion of new men was needed, and there was one new man who, in less than three years, had made a reputation as the best executive in the country. Mr. Cleveland received 392 votes on the first ballot; Mr. Bayard, 170; Mr. Thurman, 88. Under the two-thirds rule, 547 votes were needed for a nomination. After the first ballot there was an adjournment overnight, during which a "spontaneous" outburst for Mr. Hendricks was organized. The plan was carried out on the following morning. There were a magnificent tumult, vociferous shouting, dazzling waving of banners. The plotted effort to stampede the Convention was worthy of its authors; and, when it was over, Mr. Cleveland received 683 votes and Mr. Hendricks 451½. Then Mr. Hendricks was made the candidate for Vice-President.

The campaign which followed, so far as the politicians were concerned, was all that a Presidential campaign should not be; but the Independents supported Mr. Cleveland and the issue became one of character. Mr. Blaine was tainted as a public man; an effort was made to taint Mr. Cleveland's private character. This effort reacted on those who originated it and who hoped to profit by it. A committee of Republicans of Buffalo investigated the accusations against him and became strong admirers and partisans of Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Cleveland was elected, receiving 219 electoral votes to 182 cast for Mr. Blaine. Mr. Cleveland carried New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. The thirty-six votes of New York determined the election, and that State was carried by Mr. Cleveland by a plurality of only 1,047. An effort was made to reverse the decision, and the people of the city of New York, by reason of a suspicion which they entertained of an attempt by a telegraph company to tamper with the returns, grew dangerously angry. At last the truth was acknowledged; but Republican politicians, then disappointed, continued, and continue, to declare that Mr. Cleveland was "counted in" in New York. The charge was repeated last by Senator Hoar in his book of reminiscences. The Senator fixed upon Long Island City as the place where the fraud was perpetrated. This was a new location. It was charged originally against the city of New York. As a matter of fact, there was never a fairer count in the State of New York. Each party watched the other with closest care. The Republicans controlled the majority of the returning officers of the State, and the intention of these

was suspected, as was the intention of the Democrats by the others. The Republicans, in their nervous anxiety, were finally misled by a mistake in the count of the city's votes. An early announcement of the Butler vote showed apparently that a very large number of ballots had been cast for the Greenback candidate. Further examination indicated that the mistake consisted in giving, as the Butler vote, the sum of all the ballots cast for all the electors, instead of the number of ballots cast for the leading elector. There was nothing in the charge; while Senator Hoar was possibly deceived by a new accusation invented long after the election, and never heard of by any other responsible person, or else his memory had betrayed him into reviving the old charge, which all but credulous partisans had recognized as exploded.

When Mr. Cleveland was elected President, a new and useful, and, therefore, a successful political era might have begun for the country. A strong second party might have been built up; a party decidedly different from its antagonist in mental attributes and in political tendency; a party which, while in power, would have the strong Republican party for its opponent, and which, out of power, would itself constitute that kind of an opposition without which there is little hope for good government. If there is no such party now as that which Mr. Cleveland seemed to lead in the early part of the year 1885, it is the fault of the heterogeneous mass that did its best to discredit the administration of the only Democratic President since the War, and that, in the end, wrecked the party itself.

Mr. Cleveland had many difficulties to overcome. Clamoring at his back were thousands of fellow partisans who had been excluded from all Federal office since 1861 because they were Democrats. Some of these were infants during the War of Secession, so that the partisan charge made against their elders that they had sympathized with the South could not hold against them. Not only were the Federal offices filled with Republicans, but these offices had been used for partisan purposes, and their incumbents had formed the nucleus of the party army which was devoted to Republican success. It was absolutely necessary that there should be many removals, and doubtless there were more than were necessary for the good of the public service. Mr. Cleveland's standard was stated in a letter to Mr. George Will-

iam Curtis, President of the National Civil Service Reform Association. The letter was written before Mr. Cleveland was inaugurated. In it the President-elect, after saying that the new law would be enforced, as would all laws, announced his attitude toward Democratic applicants as follows: "If I were addressing none but party friends, I should deem it proper to remind them that though the coming administration is to be Democratic, a due regard to the people's interest does not permit faithful party work to be always rewarded by appointment to office, and to say to them that, while Democrats may expect all proper consideration, selections for office not embraced within the civil service rules will be based upon sufficient inquiry as to fitness instituted by those charged with that duty, rather than persistent importunity or self-solicited recommendations on behalf of candidates for appointment."

The struggle for the "relief of silver" from the penalties of the "crime of 1873" had begun. Both parties were engaged in the dubious task of reinstating the "white metal." The Democratic leaders of the silver forces in the House of Representatives were Mr. Bland and Mr. A. J. Warner. The latter wrote a letter to Mr. Cleveland asking for his views on the question. The Act of 1878, requiring the coinage of at least \$2,000,000 of silver every month, was in force. In his reply, Mr. Cleveland did not court the silver Democrats. On the contrary, he told them firmly that he favored the "suspension of the purchase and coinage of silver." It was a strong letter, and, what is more important, it was the letter of a man who believed in indicating the independence of the Executive Department. Here was a President intent upon speaking his own views as the Constitution required that the President should do. These letters were written before the inauguration, so that Mr. Cleveland began his administration under suspicion of the Democratic spoilsmen and the Democratic silver men. At this period neither party desired a President who would refuse to reward party service with public place, while all so-called practical politicians who believed in the free coinage of silver were clamoring for it, while those who were opposed to it were keeping still. Mr. Cleveland offended against the traditions and the practice.

Mr. Cleveland became at once the President of the whole country, as he had been Mayor of the whole city of Buffalo and Gov-

error of the whole State of New York. This distinguished him from most modern Presidents, Mr. Hayes being a notable exception. The Democratic President further returned to the policy of older days in choosing his Cabinet. He had a very small acquaintance with public men, and, therefore, he invited the prominent Democrats of the country, especially those of the Senate and the House of Representatives, to consult with him at Albany, where he was passing the time between the election and his inauguration. The result of his consultations was a very strong Cabinet, although the appointment of Mr. Bayard, Mr. Garland and Mr. Lamar, who would have been very useful to the new administration if they had remained in the Senate, may be criticised. The two New York members of the Cabinet were Mr. Manning and Mr. Whitney, and they were strongly supplemented by Mr. Daniel S. Lamont, who was the President's Secretary. The Cabinet was the most distinguished of all Presidential cabinets since the administration of Mr. Lincoln, with the possible exception of that of Mr. Hayes. The return of the Democrats to power took place under promising auspices. Many of the great appointments, notably that of Edward J. Phelps as minister to England, were in keeping with the Cabinet appointments, while many of the subordinate places were also filled by strong and able men. The incoming of the party was of great value to the country, to which was thus given a new body of public servants intent upon bettering the work of their predecessors.

The new President, when he took office in 1885, was able to inaugurate a struggle for the independence of the Executive. Through its control of the civil service, constitutional and usurped, the Senate had been able to make the President subordinate in the matter of appointments. Mr. Cleveland was the only President since the War of Secession who insisted, against the opposition of the Senate, upon asserting and enjoying the rights and powers which the Constitution has given to the Executive Department. The Tenure of Office Act was passed in 1867 for the purpose of compelling Andrew Johnson to retain an obnoxious Secretary of War. In 1869, soon after General Grant's inauguration, the most obnoxious features of the law were repealed. In 1885 the Senate, the majority being Republican, and, on this occasion, under the leadership of Senator Edmunds, insisted on a report from the Attorney-General as to the

reasons for the removal of the United States District Attorney of Southern Alabama. The further contention was made that the Senate was entitled to know the reasons for which the President made removals, and to this Mr. Cleveland, assuming the responsibility of the Attorney General's refusal to comply with the Senate's demand, asserted that the duty of nomination and removal was placed by the Constitution upon him alone, and that he would permit no interference by a co-ordinate branch of the Government. The President, he argued, was alone responsible, and he would not tolerate any questioning of his motives. Mr. Cleveland gained a signal victory over the Senate. In 1886, the remainder of the Tenure of Office Act was repealed. Mr. Cleveland, like his predecessors and like his successors also, notwithstanding his victory on this occasion, was greatly hampered by the practice of the Senate, and especially by its "rule of courtesy." This rule was frequently resorted to in order to prevent Mr. Cleveland from refusing to name for offices the friends of Senators; in his second administration it was used for the purpose of preventing him from securing the appointment of the Democrats in whom he especially confided. Mr. Cleveland was more than once forced to appoint men of whom he did not approve, or whom he would not have selected, in order that he might carry on the Government by filling the essential subordinate places. He did not yield gracefully to this system of compulsion, but the Senators would have crippled the Government, by refusing their assent to any nominations, if the President had not yielded now and then, but by his obstinate assertion of his independence on every occasion and at every moment when he could succeed, Mr. Cleveland gained the enmity of the spoilsmen of both parties. He also incurred the antagonism of the Independents, or "Mugwumps" as they had been called in the campaign of 1884, because these would not consent to any dalliance with the old system of rewarding politicians. Before his official career was ended, however, the Independent leaders and voters came thoroughly to understand his real devotion to their own ideals, and perhaps to realize the difference between the limitations upon the President, who is forced to work the institutions of Government with the means at his command, and the freedom of those whose duty it is to keep the standard constantly before the public.

Mr. Cleveland's first administration enormously increased the credit of the Democratic party, and it greatly helped the Republican party. The Democrats controlled the House of Representatives, and the Republicans controlled the Senate. Some excellent measures were enacted, and the attacks upon the integrity of the Government and upon the prosperity of the country which had been predicted by reckless partisans were not made. The House advocated and passed good measures, and the Senate majority exercised its power, on the whole wisely, for the public good. The old rule of the succession to the Presidency was changed to be more in harmony with our system of government, so that the Presidency would go, if there were no Vice-President, to the members of the Cabinet in a certain order of precedence, instead of, first, to the President *pro tempore* of the Senate and then to the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Interstate Commerce Commission was established. A law was passed regulating the counting of the electoral votes, to the end that we might never again have a repetition of the utterly demoralizing performance after the election of 1876.

The great legislative feature of this first term was the attempt to change the tariff taxes. Mr. Cleveland came slowly to his final conviction as to the need of tariff reform, as to the injustices of the existing tariff to the consumers of the country—that is, to the country at large. His progress to the views which he expressed in his tariff message of 1887 was not satisfactory to the Democrats in Congress, who had then been engaged in the struggle for more rational duties since 1883; but, when Mr. Cleveland finally spoke, it was with a power which shook the political body. His message was confined to the single theme. "It is a condition which confronts us, not a theory," he said, and he added: "The simple and plain duty which we owe the people is to reduce taxation to the necessary expenses of an economical operation of the Government, and to restore to the business of the country the money which we hold in the Treasury through the perversion of governmental powers. These things can and should be done with safety to all our industries, without danger to the opportunity for remunerative labor which our working-men have, and with benefit to them and all our people, by cheapening their means of subsistence and increasing the measure of their comforts."

The message was followed during the session by a bill by Mr. Roger Q. Mills—really the bill of the Democratic members of the Ways and Means Committee, of which Mr. Mills was chairman. In 1883, when Mr. Morrison introduced his bill, Mr. Randall, chief of the knot of Democratic Protectionists, was able to procure the defeat of the measure. The party had grown more united in 1888, and Mr. Mills's bill was carried in the House by a vote of 162 to 149.

The President had not kept his hold upon the country for reasons which have been given, and which were partly the consequences of offences to Democratic politicians, chief of whom was Senator Gorman. Mr. Cleveland lost the election of 1888, and the demoralization which was eventually to deprive the country of an opposition party that had given so much of promise may be said to have set in. It is not true that Mr. Cleveland was defeated solely on account of his tariff message, a claim which is flattering to the desires and interests of the Protectionists. He was defeated partly by the vote of Independents who gladly returned to him in 1892, and by the unostentatious disaffection of certain Democratic spoilsmen who would naturally be opposed to any President who would not distribute offices to needy henchmen.

The four years' interval between 1889 and 1893 were spent by Mr. Cleveland in New York City in the practice of his profession. In that interval Mr. Cleveland grew wonderfully in reputation with the people of the country. The Democratic rule had been dreaded by a good many people who are afflicted with the too common notion that all political opponents are wicked enemies of their country; but, under Mr. Cleveland's leadership, the party had done well for the country, and, what is of more importance, notwithstanding the display by some of its leaders of predatory instincts with respect to spoils—instincts which have not been wholly unknown among Republican politicians—the party had shown that the subject of its thoughts when it was placed in practical charge of the Government was for the country, and not for special selected interests in whose behalf the taxing power of the Government was employed. The Republicans had carried the House of Representatives and had retained the Senate. Mr. Thomas B. Reed was chosen Speaker. His administration was particularly signalized by the adoption of new

rules for the House of Representatives that eventually put an end to debate and deliberation in the popular branch of Congress. The principal results of the Republican control of the Government were disastrous to the country. Thus again had the Democratic party received benefit which would have been long enduring if the leaders in Congress had realized their great good fortune in possessing such leaders as Mr. Cleveland and his immediate party friends, and such a cause as that which he made the controlling issue in his message of 1887. This issue was already beginning to enable the Democrats to carry Congressional districts, which theretofore had been always Republican, in the States of Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Nebraska and Iowa. The two acts of the Republican party which wrought disaster were the McKinley Tariff Act of 1890 and the so-called Sherman Silver Act of the same year. The McKinley Tariff Act was based frankly on the assertion that the national Government should use its power to levy customs dues primarily for protection and incidentally for revenue. This, of course, was an act for the benefit of a favored class. The Silver Act directed the monthly purchase of 4,500,000 ounces of silver. The Senate had amended this act when it came from the House of Representatives with a free-coinage measure, but this amendment was thrown out by the House. Its bill, as adopted by the Conference Committee, largely the work of Mr. Sherman, was enacted. Senator Sherman had discredited Mr. Harrison by asserting that the purchasing measure was necessary because, if that much were not given to the silver people, including in this term the silver-mine owners, a free-coinage measure might be passed, and Mr. Harrison would sign such a bill. Another unpopular measure was Mr. Lodge's Force Bill. This was killed eventually in the Senate by the silver men, who made a bargain with Democratic Senators to this end.

The result of the conduct of the Republicans resulted in a sweeping Democratic victory in 1890. The Senate of the Fifty-second Congress, which began on March 4th, 1891, remained Republican; but the House became largely Democratic. There were in it 236 Democrats, 88 Republicans and 8 Independents. In this campaign the tariff was the main issue, and it is to this and to the issue created by the Force Bill, and to the contrast between Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Harrison, that the Democrats owed their great victory.

The Democrats nominated Mr. Cleveland for the third time in 1892, promising the repeal of the McKinley Tariff Act, and denouncing the Sherman Silver Act as a "cowardly makeshift." The platform further declared that "the dollar unit of coinage of both metals must be of equal intrinsic and exchangeable value." This was Mr. Cleveland's platform. He had refused to consent to be nominated until he had learned of the terms of the money plank. The silver question had come to the front by the enactment of the Sherman law and by the Senate's passage of a free-coinage bill. In view of Mr. Cleveland's attitude on the money question, evidenced in his Warner letter of 1885, the silver men were opposed to him. At that time these were divided between the two parties; but, as the South had adopted the cause of free coinage, the larger number of silver advocates in Congress were Democrats. The Republicans and Democrats of the West were for silver, and the two parties in the East were opposed to free coinage. There were other than silver Democrats opposed to Mr. Cleveland's third nomination. Mr. Gorman was against it, and so was Mr. David B. Hill, of New York. The latter called a party State convention, known as the "Snap Convention," early in the year, and it appointed a delegation favorable to his own candidacy. Thus it seemed that Mr. Cleveland's nomination was opposed by the Democrats of his own State. This was further emphasized by the action of Tammany Hall, and other dissatisfied Democrats, who, at the very Convention, declared in writing over their own signatures that Mr. Cleveland could not carry his own State at the election, if he were nominated. Contrary evidence was furnished by the "Anti-Snappers," who held a convention at Syracuse. They were led by Charles S. Fairchild, William R. Grace, Oswald Ottendorfer and a company of young men who had entered politics at the dawn of what promised to be a new era, and who were intent upon serving the country rather than their own interests. The Convention, answering the demand of the country, disregarded the opposition of Mr. Hill and Tammany Hall, and nominated Mr. Cleveland. The result of the election justified the nomination. Mr. Cleveland received 5,556,562 votes and Mr. Harrison, 5,162,874. The electoral vote was as follows: Cleveland, 277; Harrison, 145; Weaver, 22. Weaver's popular vote seemed to be significant. It was 1,055,424, but it was, in fact, the result of

a fusion in Republican States by means of which the candidates of the People's party received the support of the Democrats. Congress now became Democratic in both Houses. In the Senate there were 44 Democrats, 37 Republicans, 4 Independents and 3 vacancies. In the House there were 218 Democrats, 127 Republicans and 11 Populists.

When Mr. Cleveland was inaugurated, the Sherman silver law had furnished the needed impulse to push the country to the verge of the great panic which soon began. By custom, which had the force of law, the Treasury was keeping a gold reserve of \$100,000,000. This reserve had been encroached upon in the Harrison administration, although the facts were not openly confessed. The first complete fiscal year during which the McKinley Tariff Bill was in operation, the customs receipts of the Government fell off from \$220,000,000, the receipts of 1891, to \$177,000,000, about \$43,000,000. There was an increase to \$203,000,000 in 1893, but a falling off in 1894 to \$132,000,000, nearly \$90,000,000 less than the receipts from customs duties for the fiscal year 1891.

Appropriations had increased, while revenue was decreasing. The last year for which a Democratic Congress made appropriations was the fiscal year 1892. The expenditures for that year, excluding post-office expenditures, amounted to \$345,000,000: the first year of the return of the Republican party to Congress was 1891; the first year for which the Republican Congress appropriated was 1893. The expenditures for that year were \$383,000,000. While the public finances were disarranged, the main reason for the disturbance was monetary. The fear that the country was in danger of going to a silver basis was world-wide. Gold was hoarded. The legal-tender notes were used for the purpose of extracting gold from the Treasury. Therefore gold left the Treasury. In the opinion of Mr. Harrison and his Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Foster, the time had come when it was necessary to issue bonds for the purpose of obtaining the gold needed by the Government. The plates were made ready in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, but the 4th of March arrived before they had been used, and Mr. Harrison's administration escaped its own responsibility, and the responsibility of its party, which was most unjustly thrown upon Mr. Cleveland and his administration. His antagonists have not ceased to

blame him and the so-called Wilson Tariff Bill for the panic of 1893, notwithstanding the fact that it was primarily due to legislation for which both parties were responsible, although Republicans were its authors and main advocates, and notwithstanding the further fact that the so-called Wilson Bill did not go into effect for two years after the panic began. Then, too, for the fiscal year 1895, the first year during which the new law operated, the customs revenue increased by \$21,000,000; in the second year of the law it increased \$8,000,000 more; in the last year, \$16,000,000 more was added to the revenues. This increase of revenue, however, is not to be credited to what the Republicans denominate a "free-trade" measure, for the bill, as changed in the Senate, was not the measure advocated by Mr. Wilson, approved by Mr. Cleveland, and passed by the House of Representatives.

I have anticipated the course of events for the purpose of completing, in its appropriate place, all that I shall say with reference to the untruthful assertions concerning the responsibility of Mr. Cleveland, and of the legislation of his administration, for the hard times then brought upon the country by the silver law of reckless and incompetent public men. It now became Mr. Cleveland's duty to repeal this legislation, to put an end to the menace which had created a currency famine, had nearly suspended business and had ruined thousands of men. Mr. Cleveland, in this work, had the able support of a strong Cabinet, but leaned especially on his Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Carlisle. The other members of the Cabinet who were of special assistance were Mr. Gresham, Secretary of State, and Mr. Lamont, Secretary of War. The President bent all his energies to relieving the country. He considered nothing but the public good. He was advised by friends in whom he trusted to recognize at once the necessity of issuing bonds. He declined to follow the advice, hoping that the need might be escaped. If he had been thinking merely of his personal and the party's welfare, he would have followed the advice, for, in that event, mendacious slanderers would not have been able to speak as if his subsequent issues of bonds were necessitated by occasions which he and not themselves had furnished. The distress of the country became so great that he called the Congress in special session on August 7th for the declared purpose of repealing the pur-

chasing clause of the Sherman act. For three months Washington was the scene of a great struggle, the centre of an interest which was due to the anxiety of the whole commercial and business world. Never had there been a firmer President, and never so obstinate a Secretary of the Treasury. These two were one in the stern resolve that there should be unconditional repeal.

In the House, under the lead of Mr. William L. Wilson, the repeal bill passed on the 28th of August. It was when it went to the Senate that the difficulty was encountered. The silver Senators rallied against it. From the very first it was clear that the bill would pass as it came from the House if a vote should be taken. The silver men, therefore, filibustered against a vote. They were both Republicans and Democrats. The Republicans made the dilatory motions, the Democratic silver Senators voting for them. The administration was hampered in the Senate by unfortunate and inescapable conditions. Senator Voorhees was chairman of the Finance Committee. He had agreed to support the repeal bill, and, as chairman, was consequently the leader, but he was half-hearted and not well informed. Some other Democrats were not loyal either to the President or to the cause in which they really and professedly believed. One of them, openly acting with the administration, in secret constantly encouraged the silver Senators to look for a compromise in favor of silver,—a compromise, to use the phrase of the day, which would “do something for silver.” Every possible effort was made to break the administration lines. Correspondents for newspapers which were strong for absolute repeal were, more than once, told confidentially by so-called gold Democrats that the administration had agreed to a compromise. These men were contending for “party harmony.” Finally, by a miserable trick, all gold Democrats but one were convinced that the President had assented to a compromise, and some of Mr. Carlisle’s handwriting was fraudulently used for the purpose of deception. The one Democrat who suspected the ruse was Senator Vilas. Mr. Voorhees had promised to introduce the pretended compromise on the following Monday. On hearing of this conspiracy, Mr. Carlisle and Mr. Gresham set themselves to compass its defeat. They worked with Mr. Voorhees until he was brought to see the false pretence on which his promise had been obtained. On the Monday morning, Mr. Cleveland sent his carriage to the railroad

station for Senator McPherson, who had been at home in New Jersey, and brought him to the White House. He was thus obtained as an ally with Senator Vilas. A little later, the gold Democrats who had signed the compromise went to the White House to persuade the President that his assent was essential to the harmony of the party, and there learned from Mr. Cleveland, with an emphasis that shocked some of them, that he would not consent. They had heard of the administration's efforts to overcome the conspirators. When they went to the Capitol they found that Senator Teller and Senator Dubois, the Republican silver leaders, had also heard of the proceedings, and were deeply angered that the Democrats had come together to make a party measure and thus to heal a party breach. They denounced the silver Democrats and declared that they would filibuster no longer. The struggle was over, and, with a slight amendment, which was quickly agreed to by the House of Representatives, the Senate passed the unconditional repeal bill on the 30th of October.

Mr. Cleveland is said to have broken up his party by his persistence for unconditional repeal. This is said by critics some of whom confess that unconditional repeal was essential to the country. Therefore, in saying that Mr. Cleveland made a mistake in thus opposing a party harmony dependent upon the continuance of an evil which was injurious to the whole country, they say, in effect, that there are times when the country's welfare must be postponed to the party's exigencies. Mr. Cleveland did not agree with them. In securing the repeal of the purchasing clause of the Sherman act he rendered the country, and the whole commercial world, a service the like of which has not been rendered by any President since Lincoln gave his life to the cause of the Union.

The silver agitation was not ended by the repeal of this act, but it needed the impulse which it received from the defeat of the Democratic tariff policy to make it as dangerous to the country as it afterwards became. The leading feature of the Democratic platform of 1892 was the promise to repeal the McKinley bill, and to make a new tariff law by which the interests of the people would be considered. "Unless," said Mr. Wilson, prophetically as it turned out, in introducing the bill of 1894, "the Democracy takes up this great cause of tariff reform, to win or

lose with it, live or die for it, the Democratic party ought to go out of power, as it will." It is unnecessary to recapitulate the misfortunes of the Wilson Bill. The measure, as all tariff measures not drawn by their beneficiaries must be made, was drawn with the assistance of the Secretary of the Treasury. It was a fairly good measure, as good as could be passed. It was passed by the House of Representatives on the 1st of February, 1894. When the bill reached the Senate it was transformed into a high protection measure by Senators Gorman, Hill, Murphy, Smith and others acting with the Republicans led by Senator Aldrich. The Senate added more than six hundred amendments. Mr. Cleveland refused to sign the bill, and perhaps he made the great mistake of his public life in not vetoing it. In a letter to Mr. Wilson, which the latter read on the floor of the House, Mr. Cleveland denounced the bill as it then stood as an act of perfidy and party dishonor. The result of this was a still further breach between Mr. Cleveland and some of the leaders of his party. What is of more importance, however, is the fact that the party had lost its opportunity and had become utterly demoralized. Its Western and Southern leaders ceased to favor free coinage for mere party reasons, as Mr. McKinley and other Republican leaders had done, and became enamoured of the policy as a party issue. The protection Democrats in the Senate had once again demonstrated that the tariff beneficiaries were strong enough to prevent the party from keeping its tariff promises. All that Mr. Cleveland had stood for and all that the Democratic party had seemed to stand for in 1885, when it was gaining the confidence of the country and becoming a real party of opposition, was discarded. The party had ceased to be safe and sane; it had become a threat to prosperity and to monetary soundness, while it had broken its promise of tariff reform to the Western people, who had gone to it in 1892 and had made its victory overwhelming. These were ready now to take up any cause which would injure the East, for the East was the especial home of protection, and they were Eastern Democrats who had denied Mr. Cleveland's faith and the party promise. The party was ready to fulfil Mr. Wilson's prediction and "go out of power."

During this term the President was compelled, on several occasions, to issue bonds for the purpose of maintaining the

Treasury's gold reserve. The distress of the Treasury did not abate after the 4th of March, 1893. On the contrary, the Government was often very hard pressed for funds needed to meet its obligations, and had it not been for the skill and energy of a committee of the Treasury, selected by Mr. Carlisle, more than once the Government would have been forced, at one Sub-Treasury or another, to repudiate its checks. Finally, in January, 1894, the supply of gold at the Treasury was so low that Mr. Carlisle was obliged to sell bonds for \$50,000,000. In the following November the sale of another \$50,000,000 of bonds became necessary. As soon as the gold was in the Treasury, however, it began to disappear, and at the beginning of 1895 the reserve was down to about \$50,000,000. Mr. Cleveland sent a special message to Congress in which he clearly pointed out the weaknesses of our money system, and urged the enactment of a law authorizing the issue of three-per-cent. bonds payable in gold. A bill to carry out this recommendation was defeated. Congress showed no disposition to take any steps for the protection of the gold reserve. By February 8th, 1895, the reserve had fallen to \$42,000,000. The suspension of gold payments was imminent. The Sub-Treasurer in New York had notified the Treasury that his supply could hold out only one more day. Under these circumstances, Mr. Cleveland was compelled to secure gold where he could get it. He was criticised for not selling bonds by popular subscription, but there was no time to resort to that method. Subsequently bonds were thus sold. As it was, a contract was made with a syndicate of bankers, who agreed to furnish the Government with 3,500,000 ounces of gold (about \$65,000,000), and to protect it, for four-per-cent. coin bonds at 104½. The bonds were issued under an old law. The President urged Congress to authorize the payment of the bonds in gold, informing it that, if that were done, the interest would be reduced to three per cent., and, in the thirty years during which the bonds were to run, the total saving of interest would be \$16,000,000. Congress refused to grant Mr. Cleveland's request. It is well known to members on the floor that this result was brought about by a leading Republican to whom members of his own party applied for advice. He told them that they were under no obligation to help the Democratic administration out of its trouble—in other words, that they were not in duty bound to help a Demo-

cratic President render a service to the country. Subsequently, this Republican voted in favor of the Ways and Means Committee's resolution to make the bonds payable in gold, but only after the roll was called and it was known that the proposition was defeated.

Two important episodes happened in this term which have been the theme of much discussion. One of them, the intervention of Mr. Cleveland in the Chicago strike of 1894, has been the cause of a good deal of comment, and the incident has been frequently alluded to as an act of tyranny directed against organized labor. Mr. Olney, then Attorney-General, and Mr. Cleveland were the objects of the criticism and attack. As a matter of fact, no one was more solicitous for the rights of the laboring man than Mr. Cleveland, and no one more firmly believed in the right of labor to organize than Mr. Olney, as was shown by his subsequent intervention to prevent the discharge of members of an organization of railroad employees by the receiver of the Reading Railroad. The strikers in Chicago were, it is true, guilty of committing "domestic violence," and if that were all Governor Altgeld was right in insisting that their suppression was the task of the State, with which the Federal Government should not interfere except on the invitation of the State authorities. But Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Olney took the ground that the power of the Federal Government was attacked by the rioters; that they were interfering with interstate commerce and with the carrying of the mails. They were subsequently sustained by the Supreme Court in the Debs case. Mr. Cleveland vindicated the law and the nation's authority. Injunctions were obtained, under the direction of Mr. Olney, for the purpose of preventing interference with and injury to the property of the United States, and the property of others the protection of which, under the laws of the nation, was the duty of the general Government. The injunction was defied. The United States Marshal reported that the mob only jeered at him when he read it. The riotous interference with property, the derauling of cars to obstruct the mail trains and the through business of the roads, continued. The troops under General Miles were ordered out, Mr. Cleveland issuing a proclamation in which he described all persons "forcibly resisting and obstructing the execution of the laws of the United States, or interfering with

the functions of the Government, or destroying or attempting to destroy the property belonging to the United States or under its protection," as "public enemies." Criminal proceedings were also begun in the courts. Debs and some others were arrested on the 10th of July, charged with obstructing the mails. On the 17th, Debs and the other officials of the Railway Union were again arrested charged with violation of the injunction. The Supreme Court, Justice Brewer delivering the opinion, decided that the President was within his Constitutional power in directly interfering to prevent forcible obstruction of the mails; and that the court had jurisdiction to issue the injunction. The episode was a notable exhibition of courage on the part of the elected President to uphold and to enforce the laws which he had sworn to execute. Here once more he displayed an absolute patriotism, for the temper of the time warned him and Mr. Olney plainly that they were risking their political futures by interfering with a mob of which the Democratic Governor of Illinois and the Democratic Mayor of Chicago were afraid. Ten years afterwards, when Mr. Cleveland's name was mentioned in all parts of the country as the possible candidate for President, he uttered and published an account of this strike, defending his own part in it with a courage and an indifference to the possible political consequences to himself the equal of which have been the happy possession of no other English-speaking politician of our day, with the exception of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley. In concluding his account of the affair, Mr. Cleveland wrote: "As we gratefully turn its concluding page, those who were most nearly related by executive responsibility to the troublous days whose story is told may well especially congratulate themselves on the part which fell to them in marking out the way and clearing the path, now unchangeably established, which shall hereafter guide our nation safely and surely in the exercise of the important functions which represent the people's trust."

The second episode was that of the contest between Venezuela and Great Britain on the subject of the boundary line between the two. It had been in progress since 1814, and the United States had taken part in it in order to secure the arbitration of the dispute. Many Secretaries of State and Ministers to England had participated; Mr. Fish, Mr. Evarts, Mr. Blaine, Mr. Frelinghuysen, Mr. Bayard, Mr. Gresham, and, at last, Mr.

Olney. Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Olney brought the subject to a conclusion. The Monroe Doctrine was both asserted and strictly limited. The contention was made that this country had the right to assert the doctrine for its own protection, and that it meant that no European country should establish or extend political dominion on this hemisphere, directly or indirectly. The question confronting the United States was whether England was or was not insisting on acquiring territory by unsubstantial claims, depending upon her power and upon the weakness of Venezuela. Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Olney insisted on arbitration, and the President, under the authority of Congress, appointed a commission in order to ascertain the character and the rightfulness of England's demands. In his message to Congress, Mr. Cleveland alluded to the possibility of a breach between this country and Great Britain, and this caused great disturbance in the money market, but the country was with the President, and England yielded quickly to his demands. It was always asserted by Mr. Cleveland and his friends that he had prevented a war between the two countries and had not created the danger of one. At any rate, England became more friendly to this country than its governing classes had ever been before. This occurred in 1895, and immediately afterwards, under the auspices of Mr. Cleveland, Mr. Olney and Lord Pauncefoot negotiated a general arbitration treaty for the settlement of all disputes between the two countries. In 1897, this treaty was so mutilated by the amendments of a hostile Senate that it was practically defeated.

Mr. Cleveland went out of the Presidency in March, 1897, and, therefore, out of public life. His work as a statesman, however, was not done, for, on more than one occasion, he became the adviser of his countrymen, with whom his fame grew larger as time went on, until he was long recognized as our first citizen. His party had broken to pieces. If this were chargeable to him, it is because he did his duty to the country instead of seeking to win the support of party leaders selfishly seeking other than the country's good. But it is clear in the light of subsequent events that, if the party had possessed the wisdom and the virtue to follow Mr. Cleveland, the country would now enjoy the benefit of a strong and patriotic second party without which good government in a republic is difficult, if not impossible.

HENRY LOOMIS NELSON.